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Evaluative Criteria for Secondary School Libraries.

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Because of increased school enrollment and the explosion of knowledge in recent years, adequate secondary school libraries assume great importance in today's educational programs. In order for the library to best serve the student, adequate provisions for the selection of instructional materials and equipment should be provided. Provision should be made for circulating all types of materials for overnight use. Adequate time for library use should be provided all students during the school day; the library should be accessible to them in the evenings and on weekends and holidays. Teachers should cooperate with the librarian in planning library services and should familiarize themselves with resource material holdings in their subject areas. Funds available to purchase audiovisual materials should be used. Microfilming and microreading should be utilized to compensate for limited storage space. No library program can be completely successful without the interest and support of the school board, the principal, the superintendent, the teachers, and the librarian. (BS)

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THE LIBRARY'S ROLE IN THE READING PROGRAM

Criteria for Good Libraries

"Evaluative Criteria for Secondary School Libraries"

10:30 - 11:30 A.M. -- Friday, April 26, 1968

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The Pilgrim Fathers realized that education was essential to their cultural survival. As a result of this concept, many of their early efforts were directed toward establishing schools in which their children were taught to read. They depended upon the Old World for their traditions, culture, and for the reading material which reflected and illuminated this culture. Therefore, the Bible was the main book used in the homes and schools. The Puritans especially demanded that their children be taught to read and become knowledgeable in tenets of the Christian faith.

As early as 1647, the General Court in Massachusetts Bay Colony passed an act requiring all townships boosting a population of fifty families to maintain an elementary school. In spite of the fines imposed for failure to comply with the law, many townships refused to establish the schools or to raise the money for the teacher's salary.

It appears that even though respect for education lay deep in the hearts of the early settlers, most felt that the benefits of education should be limited to the privileged few --the rich, the socially acceptable. We were well into the 19th century before there was established in this country a system of publicly supported schools devoted to the education of <u>all</u> the children.

For many years the schools used the text books exclusively. The text book was found to be inadequate to provide sufficiently varied and stimulating learning experiences. Obviously, other books were needed to provide supplementary reading. Public libraries met this need until 1905 when the first secondary school library came into existence.

In 1960 the American Library Association published its standards for school libraries, and educators considered it unbelievable that the requirement was 10 books per pupil in schools of 500. Five years later, due to educational innovations and media production there were rapid developments in school libraries.

Problems in Library Service to Secondary Schools

There are, of course, many problems in providing library

service to secondary school students. Many of these problems, according to (3) Virginia McJenkin, stem from circumstances and attitudes following World War II. There were the population explosion, the compulsory school attendance law, the untiring efforts to bring dropouts back into school, and the colossal emphasis on the need for education beyond high school. These notable problems and objectives place extra demands on the librarian. Nevertheless, librarians are of the opinion that the library standards today are far too conservative, too hide-bound for the libraries of 1970, less than two years from now.

Closely related to the problems of population and enrollment is the fantastic explosion of knowledge. As a result a massive reformation of what is to be taught and learned in the nation's schools is the supreme challenge of her educators or directors of learning. The drive for excellence and quality in the teaching and the learning, and an emphasis on making each individual independent in his learning are decisive factors in the changing educational picture.

Young people, says (4) Olson, have more to learn than ever before because of the tremendous expansion in knowledge; and they have greater opportunity to learn because of the increased interest in secondary school libraries. The grave necessity for maintaining our nation's leadership and preserving our way of life in a peaceful world has made the need to learn all the more urgent. As a result, education has taken on a new seriousness of purpose. Every possible aid to learning must be used to its fullest; and of all the aids available, reading remains the most significant.

Problems Due to Inadequacies

Despite our recent emphasis on school libraries, we still have some serious inadequacies. One major obstacle emphasized by (3) McJenkin in improving library service to secondary school students (and a most valid criticism of schools) is the lack of time allowed for use of the school library. Before school hours, during the school day, and after school hours could be utilized. Many high school students travel miles to and from school on busses, public transportation, or in automobiles. These students suffer especially from schedules that do not provide school time for library study. To add to this problem, the school library closes when school closes for the day. This practice is unfortunate even for those who live near enough to use the library after school. Consider the many assignments made by teachers! Despite the library study necessary in preparing these assignments, the library is closed at the end of the school day. Even if the student prefers to study at home, he finds numerous references that are not available for overnight checkout. Practically all high school libraries are closed in the evening, nights, weekends, holidays, and during the summer except on very special occasions. No matter how well trained the librarian is nor how well equipped the library, if students are limited to its use, the school's intention and its reading objectives suffer. Rather than curtailing the use of the library for even essential preparation, the school authorities should work out some plan whereby every pupil has some free time just to enjoy reading in his school

library.

Another inadequacy is the specific problem of librarian-teacher relationship. This problem stems from the failure of the school principal to appoint a representative committee of teachers and other staff members to work with the librarian and other resource specialists serving the school. Such a committee should evaluate the library program and instructional resources. It may also suggest needed changes and improvements; assist in selecting materials and equipment; assist in preparing the annual budget for the library program, especially its instructional resources.

The Teacher, Principal, Superintendent and Librarian

A successful teacher, says (1) Hartz, must know what books in his field are owned by the library; he should be acquainted with the contents; he should know the specific chapters and pages that contain the material assigned or desired. The common practice of telling the class to, "Ask the librarian if she has something on this subject," is a reflection on the teacher responsible for making the assignment.

According to (5) Srygley, the principal of a secondary school does not necessarily have to be an expert in technical library work. He does need, however, to understand why a library is important, the characteristics of a good collection of library materials, the approximate cost of the materials, and the needed personnel required to make the library a real force in the lives of both teachers and students.

The kind of library found in a school is one measure of the nature and quality of its instructional program. Thus, the principal should encourage continuous evaluation of the library service as a means of improvement. The library must not continue to be the second rate citizen it is now in many schools.

Some school superintendents says (1) Hartz, are still not convinced, or they honestly don't know that libraries which are adequate in space, equipment, book collection for its many readers and staff, are as much an absolute necessity as are a principal's office, a cafeteria, or a gymnasium. To a great extent the secondary school library can be considered the pulse of the school's instructional program.

And now the librarian--the librarian should know many books, their contents, their style of writing, and their level of difficulty. She should know individual pupils, their reading abilities and their interests. She should encourage the expansion of interests. She should promote discrimination in selection and reading, and she should encourage the appreciation or importance of good writing habits. The librarian should follow up suggestions made by teachers and counselors of pupils' needs as evidenced in the library. She should provide abundant materials to meet varying abilities and interests and to encourage discrimination and appreciation in their use. And she should provide the opportunity and the atmosphere conducive to reading as well as the stimulation and encouragement for reading. Considering these requirements for a good librar-

ian, let me make this plea that the job of librarian be a fulltime occupation -- not just extra service from some willing teacher of English or of reading.

Developing Character in Library Reading

Important as the library is as a supplement to the regular school assignments, it has an even more important function. (4) Olson reminds us that developing character and building sound human relations through reading is part of the growing determination of reading instruction. Through effective guidance, a teacher--librarian, may help influence a pupil's sense of values by providing books which subtly develop such ideals as emotional stability, moral integrity, and the training of the will. Merely providing books is not enough, however, the ideas within the books must be transferred to the minds of young people. Through guidance and understanding, pupils may be helped to select books they need for particular problems.

Books and Some Newer Media of Communication

Teachers, parents, peers and contemporary institutions (2) says the National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, are the sources of many ideas and much information for students, but books have long been considered the primary means whereby ideas of enduring importance are recorded and communicated across the barriers of space and time; and librarians have traditionally accepted the responsibility of making books accessible and for encouraging their use. In recent years, however,

there have been developed many new and wonderful devices which, while they have not and should not replace books, offer their own unique contribution to the same end. The newly developed audio-visual materials may well be considered a vital part of a good school library. The present-day trend in secondary schools is to set up more effective methods to teach reading and to make the school library a vital source of broader information. Below is a list of criteria that conceivably may help to develop greater understanding of the function of the library in the reading program.

Recommendations and Criteria for Library Improvement

Ideally, we recommend a comprehensive research project initiated each year in each state to evaluate certain aspects of the library program as it relates to reading. Then, with cooperation and coordination among states, appropriate evaluation of effectiveness could be accomplished without undue strain on any one state or school system.

The following questions might serve as a basic criteria for one of determining the data that should be collected to relate the extent of outcomes desired from reading program activities. They may also prove valuable in forming hypotheses to be tested in experimental studies of reading programs activities:

1. How adequate are the provisions for the selection of instructional materials and equipment in terms of needs of the reading program?

2. How adequate are the periodicals and paperbacks supply to meet student needs, demands, interests, and requests in the reading classes and library study?

3. How much provision is made for circulating all types of materials for overnight use--encyclopedias and other reference books, current issues and bound volumes of periodicals, filmstrips with handviews, and recordings for home listening?

4. How adequate has preparation been made for the school library to be open in the evenings, on Saturdays, during holidays and at night?

5. How adequately do teachers communicate with the librarian in planning library services to meet curriculum reading needs?

6. How adequately does your school use NDEA funds for print and audio-visual materials?

7. How adequate is microfilming and microreading to meet school needs due to limited storage space of indexed periodicals?

8. How adequate are the individual library accommodations available for reading for a given percent of the school enrollment?

Most assuredly, we agree with (5) Sarah K. Srygley in her assertion that all of our culturally deprived youngsters are not necessarily, also, the economically deprived. The library may be a center of cultural enrichment for all culturally deprived children. Through good school libraries, our young people may discover this wonderful world in which they live--

its people, its places, its problems. Too, they may also come to appreciate their own cultural heritage and gain some insight into their responsibility for upholding and improving it. They may find information, inspiration, and a sense of personal and social value which is so urgently needed. They may grow in ability to seek and to find the truth.

Conclusion

With these observations, it is our sincere hope that administrators and teachers will become aware of the fact that the more opportunities carefully provided during the school day for students to use all types of resources needed to enrich and deepen classroom experiences, the more discriminating tastes in reading should prevail.

Interestingly enough, we may make all the recommendations or suggestions to the librarians for the reading area that we deem of great value, but without the cooperation of both the pupils and the teachers of her respective school, the deep vision of her principal, the acceptance of her superintendent, and the financial support of her school board, the library will fail to become the vital force for learning of which it is so capable.

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